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METHODS OF TEACHING LATIN

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Until quite recently the conventional methods of teaching Latin have been little affected by the increasing storm of criticism emanating from sources friendly and unfriendly. But at the present time signs are not wanting that we are on the verge of a new régime; and as we pass from the old to the new it is highly important that no false step be taken. It is in the hope of shedding a little light on the way that the following observations are offered.

In the search for a cure for the evils of the present system of instruction it is quite natural that the thoughts of many should turn to the direct method of teaching Latin. In England this movement has made some headway; and although American teachers have had little opportunity to see the method in actual operation, still it has been possible to gather some general impressions about it from verbal and printed reports; and now the numerous textbooks issued at the Oxford University Press and elsewhere bring us almost into the classroom, so that anyone willing to take the trouble can inform himself with considerable accuracy as to the strong and weak points of the system as thus far developed.¹

In *Praeceptor* Mr. Andrew has mapped out for teachers a course of instruction in the use of the direct method. In many respects this book is helpful, but it is marred by the interspersing of much

¹ The series issued at the Oxford University Press, under the general editorship of Dr. Rouse and Mr. S. O. Andrew, already includes the following: *Primus Annus*, by W. L. Paine and C. L. Mainwaring; *Decem Fabulae*, by W. L. Paine, C. L. Mainwaring, and E. Ryle; *Puer Romanus*, by R. B. Appleton and W. H. S. Jones; *Praeceptor*, by S. O. Andrew; *P. Ovidi Nasonis Elegiaca*, by L. R. Strangeways.

G. Bell & Sons have published the following: *Pons Tironum*, by R. B. Appleton and W. H. S. Jones; *Olim*, by Miss Effie Ryle. *Cothurnulus*, by E. V. Arnold, is a text on somewhat the same order.

There is one American text, *Beginners' Latin*, by E. C. Chickering and H. Hoadley, Scribner, New York.

ill-judged controversial matter. Without Mr. Andrew's strictures we should be ready enough to believe that there are serious defects in the conventional system of Latin instruction in England; too often, no doubt, the dull student can be found who memorizes rules and lists of words in parrot fashion, without knowing much about them or about Latin; and some of the pupils may perhaps attack a short English sentence to be turned into Latin by first "setting down" the two words they happen to know, thereafter looking up each of the other words with painful deliberation as to declension and conjugation, and finally evolving a sort of mosaic out of these heterogeneous materials. But it is certainly unfair to imply that this procedure is typical of the work in all English schools; and it is still more unwarranted to assume that the infelicities inherent in the old system can be ameliorated only by the adoption of the direct method of teaching Latin.¹

That the advocates of new methods should believe in them thoroughly and to the exclusion of all others is, of course, natural; but we of the rank and file cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that the merits of a cause are not always to be gauged by the enthusiasm of its advocates. Mr. W. H. Maxwell, after long years of experience as a public-school superintendent, contributes to the *Educational Review*,² an interesting article in which he sounds this warning very emphatically. Among the many innovations which he has seen come and go, he singles out for extended comment an experiment in the matter of teaching penmanship. At a meeting of school superintendents held some twenty-five years ago an ardent plea was made for the adoption of vertical writing. Of the speaker who urged this adoption Mr. Maxwell says:

I well remember the dramatic action with which he seated himself at a small table on the platform, and illustrated, by clever contortions of his body, the unwholesome postures too generally assumed by school children in producing slant penmanship, and the graceful, erect posture which, he claimed, would of necessity follow the universal adoption of vertical penmanship. He made his audience merry over the wrong postures, which varied from the style

¹ At one point (p. 47) Mr. Andrew himself seems for a moment to become conscious that he is laying himself open to criticism by disparaging so bitterly the work of other teachers.

² February, 1914, pp. 165 ff.

in which Mr. Samuel Weller, with the aid of a protruding and gyrating tongue, laboriously indited his first love letter, to the rigid posture which many school-masters then made their pupils adopt.

A profound impression was made upon the superintendents by this performance, and a general adoption of vertical writing shortly ensued. The sequel Mr. Maxwell describes as follows:

What were the results? Instead of writing vertical penmanship, our pupils, for the most part, acquired a slow, stiff, backhand penmanship, unlovely to the eye, and therefore illegible, and they assumed just as unhygienic postures as before. . . . Our graduates were not infrequently obliged to go to a commercial school to unlearn what they had been taught in the public schools, and to acquire rapid and legible writing.

In a consideration, therefore, of the advisability of the adoption of the direct method of teaching Latin, the enthusiastic advocacy of a few should have little weight, unless it is backed by substantial argument and by conspicuous success in actual practice.

From the point of view of constructive argument it must be confessed that Mr. Andrew's book makes but a poor showing—much poorer, it would seem, than the facts themselves might warrant. His introductory argument (chap. i, pp. 8 ff.) proceeds as follows: If we were to ask a plain man what is the object of learning a language, he would almost certainly say "to speak it." The plain man would be right, (1) because language is like other arts, as Aristotle observed long ago, in the fact that its product is the same in kind as the separate acts by which the learner attains his end; and (2) because it is paradoxical to suppose that it is possible for a man to read with pleasure or to write effectively a language that he cannot speak with a sense of familiarity.

It is a small matter to show the flimsy character of this reasoning. In the first place, the "plain man" is the last person in the world to consult about methods of teaching Latin; let him but once know that you are talking about a language no longer spoken by any nation, and the very pronunciation of which is in some points a matter of dispute, and the plain man will be likely to aver that it would be a waste of time even to learn to *read* such a language, to say nothing of the folly of attempting to speak it. In the second place, the appeal to Aristotle simply brings a great name into the discussion without in any way supporting the argument; for what

Aristotle says would apply equally well to the acquisition of skill in either reading, writing, or speaking; it does not at all appraise the relative merits of these exercises. Finally, few readers will need to go outside the range of their own experience and observation to bury fathoms deep the fallacy that none but those who speak Latin with a sense of familiarity can read it with appreciation and write it with precision.

Another striking instance of the weakness of Mr. Andrew's constructive argument is found in chap. ix, pp. 77 ff. Speaking of the possibility of injuring a student's English style through testing his understanding of Latin idioms by requiring a literal rendering into English, he says:

Let us see how the test of translation works in dealing with a simple expression like *me iudice*; if the learner translates "in my judgment," this by itself (as any teacher will point out) does not ensure that he understands what he is doing—he may be wrong in all sorts of ways; while if he translates "I being judge," he shows indeed that he understands, but at what a cost! Is any teacher content that boys shall be laboriously trained to think and speak and write this sort of crib-English?

The one escape from this difficulty Mr. Andrew finds in the direct method, with the exercise conducted wholly in Latin. Thus he adds:

A boy can show that he understands *me iudice*, without resorting to English at all, by a simple explanation like *ut ego iudico* or *mea sententia*, and by answering (if it is really necessary) the question *quae constructio est haec?*

It does not seem to occur to Mr. Andrew that such periphrases as *ut ego iudico* and *mea sententia* throw no more light upon the student's understanding of the syntax of *me iudice* than does the English rendering "in my judgment"; and as for the final expedient, surely the English question "What construction is this?" would serve the purpose quite as well as a question in Latin.¹

Another specimen of very peculiar logic appears in chap. i, p. 14. With reference to practice in writing Latin, Mr. Andrew says:

It is undoubtedly true that while speech makes a ready man, writing makes an exact man. Let it be said, therefore, that the learner will write continually,

¹ As a matter of fact the danger that "translation English" will injure a pupil's normal English style seems much exaggerated. This point is considered at some length in the *Classical Journal*, V, No. 4 (February, 1910), 165 ff.

but his written work, at least in the early stages, will never go in advance of his spoken work; where he is able to speak exactly, it will be found that he is able to write exactly.

Such loose and confused composition as this surely invites attack; indeed, should the critic be inclined to levity, he might even be unkind enough to declare himself confirmed in the view sometimes expressed that the direct method is a poor school for logic.¹

The strength or weakness of the argument advanced by some one advocate of the use of the direct method does not, of course, settle finally the question of the merits of that system. Substantial success in actual practice is the ultimate test. On the basis of reports received, we cannot doubt that, in some English schools, Latin is being taught by the direct method with very satisfactory results; and it may well be that many other schools in England will seek and find a solution of their difficulties in the adoption of that system of instruction. In America the need of reform in Latin teaching surely is quite as great as in England; but the problem here is somewhat different; and no teacher should attempt to introduce the use of the direct method without first counting the cost. In this connection four points call for especially careful consideration.

1. *Difficulty of the method.*—To teachers who chafe a little under the exact requirements of the conventional style of teaching Latin it might readily seem that an easy and attractive way of escape is to be found in the apparently flexible and easy-going procedure of the direct method. But let no one suppose that teaching by the direct method is an easy task. In the Preface to *Primus Annus* (p. 7) Mr. Andrew utters a clear word of warning on this point, and in *Praeceptor* (p. 14) he returns to the charge in the following words:

Still, it must be admitted that the direct method of teaching Latin is hard; it demands forethought, skill, brains, and faith, and any teacher who desires an easy way of teaching Latin had better keep off this.

The one thing which, above all others, renders the direct method so difficult is, of course, the fact that it throws such a weight of responsibility upon the individual teacher. Working with a conventional method, with a textbook that covers every detail and

¹ This charge is discussed seriously in chap. xi of *Praeceptor* (pp. 85 ff.).

explains every difficulty in the most lucid English, we all know how hard it is to impart to some students a real knowledge of the subject. Under the direct method, the problem of instruction is infinitely more complicated. The student must begin with forms embodied in sentences; and, without knowing anything about the inflection of Latin words, he must take up in a single lesson, let us say, the accusative singular of all declensions or a cross-section of verbs of all conjugations. With no explanation in English, and relying upon pantomime, pictures, etc., the teacher must impart to the student the meanings of the words used and the significance of the terminations. Even for the best students the work begins in a perfect swirl of uncertainties and guesswork is at a premium.

With the help of the little the student knows and the much he guesses, a Latin classroom vernacular is slowly built up, through which grammatical difficulties may be explained. Ultimately the student must be led along to the point where his scattered items of information fall into a system, and he really knows his paradigms and the rules governing the use of the forms of which they are made up. In this very delicate and difficult problem of synthetic development of the pupil's knowledge, mistake and failure on the part of the teacher would be all too easy. No textbook does, or perhaps could, take the responsibility, beyond laying down some general principles with illustrations. The teacher must himself plunge in—and sink or swim, as the case may be.

2. *Special training required by the teacher.*—In view of what has been said under (1), it must be obvious that teaching by the direct method is not to be undertaken as an offhand experiment. We should, therefore, accept with a certain reservation one of Dr. Rouse's latest remarks on this subject: "As for the teachers, they can do what we have done; they can teach themselves. It only needs work."¹ If the term "work" is here so interpreted as to cover a large measure of preliminary self-training, the statement may stand; but no teacher should imperil the welfare of his department by hasty innovation. The first necessary qualification for the use of the direct method is, of course, the power of fluent expression in faultless Latin. If one may judge from the specimens of

¹ *Classical Journal*, X, No. 2 (November, 1914), 50.

written Latin frequently seen, some teachers at least are not at present well equipped in the matter of this first necessary qualification.

3. *The danger of imparting error.*—The direct-method books published in England represent a considerable period of classroom experience,¹ and they regularly contain prefatory notes indicating that they have been reviewed, before publication, by Dr. Rouse or his immediate associates. In these books, therefore, we should naturally expect to find something approaching perfection; but in these finished products there are numerous infelicities which raise very disquieting doubts as to the atmosphere and diction even of some classrooms where the direct method has been in use for some years. It is hoped that frank treatment of this aspect of the subject will be counted neither ungenerous nor unfriendly. The advocates of the direct method have put their wares upon the market and ask us to buy; and, as we have much at stake in the matter, we surely have the right, indeed we are in duty bound, to examine carefully before investing.

As to classroom atmosphere, Mr. Andrew's theory is stated with great clearness:

A conversation like the following is as easy in Latin as in English: "What was yesterday's home work?" "We had to prepare the story." "Haden't you something to write?" "No, sir, we had nothing else to do"; whereas a conversation like "You are late, Marcus." "Yes, sir, I punctured my bicycle," etc., would be rejected as un-Roman. The same principle applies to the *Reader*; it should deal with Roman life. Stories like *Robinson Crusoe* in Latin are bad, simply because their atmosphere is not Roman. They may, of course, be read "for fun," but that is another matter.²

In *Puer Romanus* an unusually successful attempt has been made to carry out this program. But even here there are flaws; for to talk of "opening" windows (p. 82), or to speak of pictures "hanging on the wall" (p. 8) can hardly fail to implant wrong notions in a student's mind.

This fault is much more pronounced in some of the other texts. Thus in *Pons Tironum* we read of a thief who, from the street, notices an open window in a Roman house; entering through this, he appropriates the family plate and attempts to make off with it

¹ In the Perse School, thirteen years (*ibid.*, p. 49).

² *Praeceptor*, pp. 15 ff.

in a bag.¹ In *Olim* there are still more surprising scenes,² in which Cato the Elder is represented as all but mobbed on the street by Roman matrons, who threaten to "throw stones at the windows of the senate house"³ and to destroy the senators' mail with acid (?),⁴ and cap the climax by raising the cry "Votes for Women."⁵

In such passages the practice and theory of the direct-method school stand in sharp contrast. Both practice and theory are open to criticism. The practice is bad, and the theory is narrow. The Romans themselves (Quintus Curtius, for example) had plenty of occasion to describe non-Roman peoples and things; and there seems to be no cogent reason why "made Latin" should avoid non-Roman topics, *provided* that things non-Roman are represented in their proper setting, and the narrator describes them as if seen through Roman eyes. It is when the Romans themselves are represented as actors in non-Roman scenes that a tactical error is made.

As for the matter of classroom diction, Mr. Andrew is not troubled by any misgivings. He admits, of course, that we are handicapped in our efforts to talk in Latin, but adds: "We have knowledge enough to be able to speak it [i.e., Latin] in such a way that Cicero, hearing it, would understand and would not be offended."⁶ This is a bold claim for anyone to make; and it certainly is not justified as yet, even in the best schools where Latin is taught by the direct method—that is, if we may judge from the infelicities and barbarisms that filter up through the carefully edited and revised texts now being put forth in England. No attempt has been made to collate this material in a systematic way. A few examples will suffice to make the point clear.

In the first place, one is impressed with the large number of phrases in which there is a discordant note; either the meaning of some word is forced, or the phrase is constructed on an English rather than a Latin plan; e.g.,

¹ P. xxxxiii.

² Pp. 38 ff.

³ "Lapides in curiae fenestras coniciamus" (p. 38).

⁴ "Epistulas atro aliquo veneno ita corrumpemus ut legi non possint" (p. 44).

⁵ P. 41 *fin.*

⁶ *Praeceptor*, p. 13.

- M. Qualis est ianua? P. Clausa est ianua. M. Et fenestra, qualis est?
- P. Aperta est fenestra (*Praeceptor*, p. 30).
 ianuam, quae semper stat clausa (*Puer Rom.*, p. 5).
 dic mihi per quid domum intres (*Puer Rom.*, p. 6).
 quadringenti aliqui milites¹ (*Puer Rom.*, p. 8).
 cum risu exclamat² (*Puer Rom.*, p. 10).
 prandium edit (*Pons Tir.*, p. xxvii).
 et recte suspicatus sum³ (*Pons Tir.*, p. xxxiii).
 incipe recitare⁴ (*Praeceptor*, p. 82).
 studiis perfectis⁵ (*Puer Rom.*, p. 69).
 manus eius a pectore pulsando amovere (*Puer Rom.*, p. 37).
 illa in aqua caro (*Pons Tir.*, p. xxi).
 priusquam finis sessioni adsit⁶ (*Puer Rom.*, p. 28).
 ad cenam vocamur⁷ (*Puer Rom.*, p. 17).
 iudicia conveniunt⁸ (*Puer Rom.*, p. 18).
 recti inimicos⁹ (*Olim*, p. 40).
 male faciunt¹⁰ (*Pons Tir.*, p. xxvi).
 videbis ubi stet municipium¹¹ (*Puer Rom.*, p. 5).

Coming to more specific points, even the casual reader of the direct-method texts will note with surprise many details of vocabulary, forms, and syntax that fit very poorly with the professed aim of producing a Ciceronian effect. A few such are the following:

incepi written almost without exception for *coepe*.

Compounds of *eo* regularly uncontracted in the perfect tenses; e.g., *redivistis*, *redivimus* (*Puer Rom.*, pp. 27 and 47).

Violation of the law of sequence; e.g., "saepenumero ne moreris tibi imperavi"; and "ut negotia quaedam secum agam, me . . . vocavit" (*Pons Tir.*, pp. xii and xxx). Noteworthy too is the liking for the post-Augustan perfect subjunctive in secondary sequence; e.g., *Puer Rom.*, pp. 13, 14.

The gerund with an object preferred to the gerundive; e.g., "quas taedet me narrandi" (*Pons Tir.*, p. xxxxi; cf. p. xxxiii *fin.* and xxxiii). So *Puer Rom.*, p. 26: "narrando somnium."

Careless use of the oblique cases of adjectives and pronouns as neuter; e.g., "de omnibus certior est factus" (*Puer Rom.*, p. 20). Cf. also the neuter *quorum* with *obliviscor*, *Pons Tir.*, p. xxxxi.

¹ "Some four hundred soldiers" (?).

² For *ridens* . . . *inquit*.

³ For *neque me id fefellit*.

⁴ For *primus recita* (?).

⁵ "When classes are over."

⁶ "Before school is out."

⁷ "Dinner is announced."

⁸ "Court convenes" (?).

⁹ "Wicked men."

¹⁰ "Misbehave" (in school).

¹¹ Said with reference to a map.

Construction with the comparative in sweeping negations: "Nihil pulchrius esse potest quam militis habitus," *Pons Tir.*, p. xv.

Ablative absolute without subject or dependent relative: "impedimenta collegimus, collectisque discessimus," *Puer Rom.*, p. 13.

Not to linger over this enumeration, note in passing the following: "Vox *alius* pueri" (*Olim*, p. 46); "Hunc . . . saxo residentem conspexit" (*Pons Tir.*, p. xxxv); "si *vis* [indefinite second person] intrare" (*Puer Rom.*, p. 5); "*periculis* plenum" (*Puer Rom.*, p. 69); "*fortiores canum*" (*Puer Rom.*, p. 36). Occasionally the expressions are Delphic in character; an amusing instance is found on p. xxxv of *Pons Tironum*: "si quis appropinquavisset viator, [Scironem solere] cogere eum sibi pedes lavare atque in mare praecipitare."

It may well be true that the laxness in Latinity noted above is in part due to the fact that the direct method makes such early and extensive use of the poets; such practice might easily blunt one's sense of the requirements of Ciceronian prose. The effects, however, are at times grotesque; for example, *pellis* serves very well for *cutis* when a thrashing is in question (*Pons Tir.*, p. xxviii), but it is startling to find it used of the skin of a dead person under the hands of the undertaker (*Puer Rom.*, p. 42). But whatever may be said otherwise, there is certainly no excuse to offer for such egregious blunders as the following:

exercitum in *locos tutos* subducit (*Puer Rom.*, p. 9).

vobis narrabo. *Specta* tabulam (*Pons Tir.*, p. xx).

Titum *demorar* meque audire cogam (fut. indic.) (*Olim*, p. 38).

neutri generis (*Praeceptor*, p. 60).

tum hic [Coriolanus] mihi *nubet* (*Cothurnulus*, p. 7).

avunculus for *patruus* (*Puer Rom.*, p. 44; cf. what is said on p. 47).

Note also "revertimus" [apparently pres.] (*Puer Rom.*, p. 5); "mihi loqui vis" (*Olim*, p. 25); "sunt quae . . . debent" (*Cothurnulus*, p. 26); "me in rus vocavit" (*Pons Tir.*, p. xxx); "Catonis domi" (in scene heading, for apud Catonem?) (*Olim*, p. 32); "domum apud eum statim ivi" (*Pons Tir.*, p. xxxiii); "pugnant . . . hac ira, hac pietas. cui¹ te dabis?" (*Cothurnulus*, p. 19).

¹ I.e., "to which (of the two)?"

To preclude any possibility of misunderstanding, it should perhaps be stated definitely that such blemishes as these do not by any means demonstrate that the direct method is proving a failure in England. At the same time, such infelicities and errors, found in carefully edited texts that represent years of experience in actual classroom practice, show conclusively that the classroom atmosphere and diction, even in the best schools and with the best direct-method teachers, is as yet far below par, if judged by a Ciceronian standard. We have no quarrel with Professor Potter in his assertion that the direct method is "sound pedagogically,"¹ but we are far from convinced that it is the *only* sound method, or that it is a *safe* method for most American schools.

4. *The time element.*—For the successful use of the direct method a liberal time allowance must be made. Mr. Andrew assumes that the English schoolboy will begin his Latin at the age of twelve, preferably after a year of French by the direct method and a course in the principles of formal grammar and phonetics. It is assumed that the boy will continue his Latin through a six-year course. *Primus Annus* provides work for about a year and a half; *Puer Romanus* carries the class along well into the third year, and, after its completion, the "reading of an actual Latin author" may be begun.² By the fourth year the boys will be advanced enough to undertake seriously translation from Latin into English, the work having been conducted, up to this point, almost entirely in Latin.³

5. *The administrative problem.*—Under this head, attention is called to but a single point, namely, the confusion that would result from a sporadic adoption of the direct method of teaching Latin. Students who change residence from one town to another would be sadly inconvenienced if obliged to continue their Latin in classes trained in a radically different way. In a personal letter from a teacher in one of the largest preparatory schools in the country, I find the following, which sets forth this difficulty concretely:

Only today I have talked with a boy who has had three years in the school which is supposed to have made the greatest success of the method advocated by our state superintendent of public instruction. This boy, strongly

¹ *Classical Journal*, X, No. 7 (April, 1915), 324.

² Preface, *Puer Romanus*.

³ *Praeceptor*, p. 78.

recommended by his former school, asked to be allowed to enter our beginners' class, on the ground that he did not know a thing about Latin from any point of view.

To resume, then, every teacher who thinks of adopting the direct method ought first to count the cost, weighing well the considerations outlined above: (1) the difficulty of the method and the chance of complete failure, (2) the need of careful preliminary training on the part of the teacher, (3) the probability of imparting error to the class, (4) the length of time required for the successful development of the plan, and (5) the administrative problem.

Of these five considerations the matter of the time element will doubtless appear to many teachers the most immediate and pressing. Our students are from fourteen to sixteen years of age when they take up the study of Latin, and the majority of them discontinue the subject at the end of the second year. Our problem is, therefore, very different from that seen in the schools of England; and probably few American teachers will sympathize with Mr. Andrew's extreme view that, whether a student ever gets to the point of reading a classical text or not, it still is better that he should devote a year or two to such training as he can get with direct-method classes that are going on to a full course in Latin.¹ Most teachers will feel that their students should read extensively in at least one author; and if it could be shown that (under the time limits imposed) the direct method is the shortest and surest road to this goal, one of the chief obstacles to the introduction of the use of that method would be removed.²

¹ *Praeceptor*, p. 46.

² Though it is perhaps inevitable that American teachers will approach the question from this angle, the English advocates of the use of the direct method would probably be inclined to complain that this procedure precludes a fair hearing of their case. And there would be some ground for such a complaint; for the whole plan, as it is developing in England, is *sui generis* in its scope. Thus *Puer Romanus* (which is put between a "beginners' book" and the reading of "an actual Latin author") is a sort of "Roman Life in Prose and Verse," and the student who perseveres into the third year and finishes this book will have had a taste of things Roman, and will have read some real Latin, too—in the way of short selections.

But here we are brought sharply face to face with another of the obstacles that stand in the way of the adoption of the direct method, namely, its difficulty. The reading in *Puer Romanus* is far harder than the Caesar and Cicero ordinarily read in the schools. Passages from Latin literature are culled from every quarter—poetry

While a few American teachers are taking a large chance and introducing the use of the direct method without knowing whether it can be carried through successfully or not, what should the rest of us do? In the first place, we should watch the progress of the experiment with a calm and undisturbed mind. Too often the direct-method propaganda is made to rest on the more or less tacit assumption that the fate of Latin as a high-school subject hangs upon the success or failure of that method. Such an assumption is gratuitous and absurd. Even Mr. Andrew, prejudiced as he is in favor of the use of the direct method, yet has the candor to say parenthetically: "I have no wish to deny that under the old method, . . . in actual practice, good work is frequently done which is very much in the spirit of the new."¹ It is, therefore, no time for panic or for "rocking the boat." We should rather, in the second place, subject to a careful scrutiny the method of instruction now in general use, to see if it can be brought into "the spirit of the new." If this is possible, we shall not need to risk the dangers of a radical experiment that would throw our whole system of Latin instruction into a chaotic condition for years to come.

Few will deny that the present method of teaching Latin falls short of the ideal; and the discussion centering about the direct method has been helpful in bringing its failings into clearer light. In this connection, attention is called to four particulars in which our work has been open to criticism.

and prose alike—and all periods, from Ennius to Pliny and Juvenal, are drawn upon. Any teacher who wants to know what it is to teach Latin by the direct method should work through a passage such as that which begins on p. 45 of *Puer Romanus*. Many college classes, with the help of two or three pages of notes in English and with frequent recourse to the lexicon, would find this passage not very easy going; yet, under the direct method, the schoolboy who had not yet taken up "an actual Latin author" would face this passage with such helps only as the teacher could give him in spoken Latin.

In this connection, the casual reader may well be moved to raise the question whether it is wise or necessary to make an "elementary" book like *Puer Romanus* so difficult. On the surface there seems to be no systematic effort to grade the passages or to remove unusual obstacles from the path (e.g., *mirabile dictu, eatur, plus solito, exsequias eunt, sies, cantant mutua, pretio venit, deos cura rita colas, felis instar, hac quidem tennis, mihi cordi erat, aera* (from *aer*), *in eo erat ut interficeretur*, etc.).

¹ *Praeceptor*, p. 47.

1. *Lack of human interest.*—The study of Latin has been made a very solemn and severe matter, far removed from the familiarity of everyday life. Even the Plautus class encounters its first Latin jest in a spirit of staid decorum—as though it might be a fatal breach of good manners to smile while dealing with a subject so serious. In this particular, reform is already beginning; and the teacher who wants to enliven beginning Latin finds an increasing amount of material ready to his hand.

2. *Misplaced emphasis in grammatical training.*—On this point Mr. Andrew's strictures are none too severe when he says: "Some teachers are never happy unless they are feeling the grammatical pulse of their classes. The words of the text . . . are so many *corpora vilia* for grammatical operations—the gender of this, the supine of that, the rule for the other thing. This anatomizing habit is the mortal enemy of interest."¹ The most obvious remedy for this difficulty is to increase the time given to the *writing* of Latin, and to make this *written* work the basis of most of the grammatical drill. This arrangement has a double advantage; the interest in the reading is not destroyed, and the pupils gain a real proficiency in writing which makes that part of the work a pleasure instead of a bugbear. And surely if a student can *write* a construction correctly in Latin, he need not be persecuted with frequent calls for the name of that construction.²

3. *Failure to grade the work properly.*—This is one of the most serious of the faults of our present system, and to it must be attributed in large measure the frightful mortality at the end of the second year. The students, fresh from the beginners' class, are thrown wholly unprepared into Caesar, where, in the early lessons, they must delve an hour or two to eke some sort of meaning out of a few lines of text, and in the year cover less than a hundred Teubner pages. In this day of free election and broadly attractive curriculum it is a wonder that such a program has not killed the subject in the schools. The way of reform is foreshadowed in Professor

¹ *Præceptor*, pp. 53 ff.

² In a discussion of the results of recent examinations in Latin of the College Entrance Examination Board, Professor McCrea makes suggestions of great interest in this connection; see the *Classical Journal*, X, No. 8 (May, 1915), 348.

Lodge's *Vocabulary of High School Latin* and Mr. Byrne's *Syntax of High School Latin*. With such helps as these it is possible to shape the preliminary work more definitely toward the needs of the later years of the course. So far as it goes, this is excellent; but it does not go far enough. It is now becoming increasingly clear that a part of the time usually spent upon Caesar should be given over to easy, *graded* readings. Inasmuch as no actual Latin author provides such reading-material, it follows that the best results can be obtained only by "making" Latin that will exactly meet the need.¹ Some schools are already using such texts, and with most gratifying results; indeed, it is being found that the time spent in preliminary reading diminishes little or not at all the amount of Caesar read; for the students are so much better prepared for the Caesar, when it comes, that they read with a rapidity unknown under the old system and, better than all, with some real appreciation of the interesting story which their author has to tell.

4. *Unsatisfactory methods of testing proficiency*.—Here again we have been bound by a dead tradition. From time immemorial it has been counted a sufficient test of ability to read a Latin author that a student should be able to write out a more or less accurate rendering of passages previously studied and explained in class. It is this vicious system of testing proficiency that is responsible for most of the "cribbing" of which so many teachers complain. Long ago Professor Lodge pointed out the absurdity of testing a pupil's power of *writing* Latin by setting before him passages of English previously unseen, while his power to *read* Latin is tested only by assigning passages he has previously studied. In this matter the Commission on College-Entrance Requirements in Latin took a forward step in recommending that every examination in a Latin author should contain a passage at sight, and that no paper should be passed in which the student failed in the sight passage.

¹ Cf. Professor Kirtland's remarks on this point in the *Classical Journal*, X, No. 5 (February, 1915), 232. The proposal to interject some "easy reading" between beginning Latin and Caesar is, of course, no novelty. The trouble has been that most "easy" reading is really neither easy nor graded. This is true even of much "made" Latin. There is at hand a short selection from *Viri Romae* that contains 36 pages of text—and 55 of vocabulary. This simple test tells the whole story.

More effective still is the following plan, which the writer has found to work very satisfactorily. State frankly to the class at the beginning of the term: (1) that the translation in every test and examination in the course will be wholly at sight, and (2) that selected passages from the material read in class will be made the basis of questions (particularly grammatical) which cannot be answered without a thorough understanding of the text. To prepare students to meet such tests as these would mean extra work for some teachers; and the student would have to contract the useful habit of keeping an accurate and well-filled notebook. The best feature of the plan, perhaps, is the fact that it everywhere puts a premium on honest preparation; indeed, the mere announcement of the program outlined above might serve to eliminate at the very start some of the lazy and the dishonest.¹

This paper would not be complete without a reference to the growing sentiment in America in favor of a reorganization of the public-school system which permits students to begin the study of a foreign language as early as the seventh grade. Children who begin Latin thus early will ordinarily devote at least two years to preparation for Caesar. This time allowance, however, is not as liberal as it might seem, because little home work—or none at all—may be possible in the seventh and eighth years.²

For classes of these less mature students the case for the direct method would rest principally on the fact that younger children imitate more freely and memorize more easily. Otherwise there are about as serious obstacles to the introduction of the direct method here as elsewhere; for the time element (as shown above) is about the same; the difficulty of synthesizing the student's knowledge may be greater; the teacher will himself need even more careful preparation; the danger of imparting error will be the same; and the administrative problem may be more complex.³

Aside from considerations of method of instruction, the question is sometimes raised whether it is desirable to attempt to begin

¹ In this connection, cf. what is said by Mr. Max Radin in the *Classical Weekly*, VIII, No. 27 (May 15, 1915), 212.

² See the *Classical Weekly*, VIII, No. 22 (April 10, 1915), 172 ff.

³ See again the *Classical Weekly*, *loc. cit.*

Latin in the seventh grade where school organization so permits, or whether it is better to leave this new field to the modern foreign languages, giving the student no opportunity to begin Latin before the traditional time, i.e., in the ninth grade. To the writer it seems that to this question but one answer is possible, namely, that Latin should by all means take its place in this new field side by side with the modern languages. Some of the reasons on which this conviction rests have been stated elsewhere.¹ One other practical consideration should be noted.

At the rate of progress expected of a seventh-grade beginner, a child who takes up a modern foreign language at that point will have covered the work of about one high-school year by the time he reaches the ninth grade. If he wishes then to begin the study of Latin, he must either find place in his schedule for two foreign languages, or he must drop his modern foreign language without having reached a point of real proficiency in its use. Confronted with these alternatives, many students would with reason postpone the beginning of Latin to a still later time, and some ultimately would not elect it at all. If, therefore, Latin does not take its place in the seventh grade alongside the other foreign languages, it will in many cases lose its opportunity in the ninth grade as well.

A final word as to method. Experience in the California schools is demonstrating very clearly that the personal equation is a factor of unusual importance in the teaching of Latin in the grades. Perhaps no more serious mistake could be made than to attempt to standardize rigidly the work of the teachers who have this subject in charge. It is essential, of course, that the work be done in accordance with a general plan, so that everything will converge toward a definite goal; but, beyond this, freedom is required. Left to themselves with the problem of detail to work out, teachers even in the same town develop quite different—and successful—methods of handling their classes. Insistence on slavish conformity to a norm would be unfortunate in the extreme.

¹ The *Classical Weekly*, VII, No. 20 (March 21, 1914), 154 ff. Cf. Professor Deutsch's paper, *ibid.*, VIII, No. 16 (February 13, 1915), 122 ff. See also "The Desirability of Latin in the Eighth Grade," by Mr. W. L. Carr, in the *Classical Journal*, IX, No. 9 (June, 1914), 385 ff.; and "Latin in the Junior High School," by Professor Lodge, in *School and Society*, I, No. 9 (February 27, 1915), 300 ff.

In a recent number of the *Classical Weekly*,¹ Miss Anna S. Jones seems to betray some disturbance of mind because she finds that the decorum to which she is accustomed in the high school is not native to the seventh grade—and she is altogether right in insisting that mere noise and enthusiasm do not spell success. Yet, while it may be true that some teachers can make Latin live in the seventh grade even though the natural spontaneity of the scholars is somewhat severely repressed, still it is also true that other instructors can harness this natural spontaneity and make it a vital factor in the work. A case in point is that of a teacher whose classes are often so enthusiastic that the principal occasionally looks in to see what is happening; but there is a method in it all, and when these same classes reach the point where they take up Caesar they are able to cover three or four books in a single half-year. It is by the fruits of the work that a teacher and his methods must be judged.

In a paper of this sort there inevitably must be features that will not please every reader. In dealing with vexed questions such as are here considered, we should all do well perhaps to join the New Academy and adopt Cicero's very sensible motto: "et refellere sine pertinacia et refelli sine iracundia parati simus" (*Tusc. Disp.* ii. 2. 5).

¹ VIII, No. 17 (February 20, 1915), 130 ff.